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EXDIS CONTRA, FOR EXDIS CONTRA DISTRIBUTION

FROM HABIB

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PREL, PM, XK, NU
SUBJECT: HABIB TRIP: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT DEL
- VALLE AND FOREIGN MINISTER ABADIA,
- APRIL 25

1. S - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: OBVIOUSLY WELL-BRIEFED ON WHAT I WOULD SAY, PRESIDENT DEL VALLE AND FOREIGN MINISTER ABADIA PROVIDED REPEATED REASSURANCES THAT THEY WILL NOT SETTLE FOR ANYTHING LESS THAN A COMPREHENSIVE, VERIFIABLE AND "VIABLE" AGREEMENT. BUT THEY SEEMED SOBERED BY MY CLARIFICATION THAT AN AGREEMENT IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE UNLESS IT PROVIDES EFFECTIVELY FOR DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. I EXPLAINED THAT THIS MEANS SUCH THINGS AS DIALOGUE, A CEASE-FIRE, DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AND EFFECTIVE AMNESTY.

THE PANAMANIAN HOPE TO RENEW CONTADORA NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH A MEETING OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES OR POSSIBLY FOREIGN MINISTERS BEFORE THE ARIAS INAUGURATION MAY 8. THEY MAINTAIN THE SANDINISTAS HAVE CHANGED THE POSITION THEY TOOK AT PANAMA AND ARE NOW READY TO REACH FINAL AGREEMENT. THEY SUGGEST SANDINISTA CAVEATS AND PRECONDITIONS ARE FOR "DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION," I.E. DEVICES TO PREPARE FSLN CADRES FOR AN AGREEMENT. - WHETHER THEY REALLY BELIEVE THIS IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. I MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE WILL NOT BUY A PIG IN A POKE: ASSURANCES ARE INSUFFICIENT; WE WILL LOOK AT A TREATY TEXT TO SEE WHETHER IT IS COMPREHENSIVE, VERIFIABLE AND SIMULTANEOUS IN IMPLEMENTATION.
END SUMMARY.

3. AMBASSADOR DAVIS AND I HAD AN HOUR-LONG MEETING WITH AN USUALLY WELL-BRIEFED AND WELL-PREPARED PRESIDENT DEL VALLE AND FOREIGN MINISTER ABADIA APRIL 25. I OPENED WITH THE SAME POINTS THAT I'VE MADE AT EVERY OTHER CONTADORA STOP,

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PARTICULARLY OUR CONCERN THAT SOME CONTADORA COUNTRIES MAY BE SO EAGER FOR AN AGREEMENT ("SO TO BE RID OF THE BURDEN") THAT THEY WILL PUSH FOR LESS THAN A COMPREHENSIVE ONE. I MADE IT CLEAR THAT SUCH CONDUCT WOULD RENEGE ON THE OBLIGATION THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES ASSUMED TOWARD US WHEN WE AGREED TO STAY OUT OF THE PROCESS THREE YEARS AGO. WHILE STATING THAT MY INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO EXPLORE EVERY POSSIBILITY FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION, I SAID AN AGREEMENT MUST BE ACCEPTABLE NOT ONLY TO THE CENTRAL AMERICANS. IT MUST ALSO BE ACCEPTABLE TO US IF THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES WANT US TO GO ALONG WITH IT.

4. RESPONDING TO MY REQUEST TO ASSESS WHERE CONTADORA IS GOING, DEL VALLE SAID AT PANAMA THE NICARAGUANS HAD GOTTEN A "DECISIVE" MESSAGE FROM CONTADORA AND THE CENTRAL AMERICANS THAT IT IS TIME TO REACH FINAL AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH THEY LEFT PANAMA STILL REFUSING TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO SIGN ON JUNE 6, THE SANDINISTAS HAVE SINCE CHANGED THEIR POSITION. DEL VALLE SAID SANDINISTA WILLINGNESS TO SIGN IS CONDITIONED ON "ONE OR TWO THINGS," BUT SUGGESTED THE CONDITIONS MAY BE FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION IN NICARAGUA, (PRESUMABLY TO PREPARE HARDLINE FSLN CADRES FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONTADORA AGREEMENT).

5. ECHOING A POINT THAT I'VE MADE REPEATEDLY AT PREVIOUS STOPS, I RESPONDED THAT WE READ THE ORTEGA RESPONSE AS NOT ONLY CONDITIONING SIGNATURE ON U.S. CESSATION OF AGGRESSION BEFORE SIGNATURE, BUT AS REQUIRING SUCH A CESSATION AS A CONDITION FOR RESUMING TALKS. DEL VALLE SAID HE THINKS THE SANDINISTAS ARE HOLDING OUT FOR THE BEST DEAL THAT THEY CAN GET, BUT REPEATED THAT HE BELIEVES THE SANDINISTAS ARE PREPARED TO REACH AGREEMENT. A MOMENT LATER, HOWEVER, HE SAID HE CANNOT PREDICT WHAT THE SANDINISTAS WILL DO. I SAID THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY PRECONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS OR FOR SIGNATURE. I ADDED THAT DEL VALLE'S ASSESSMENT THAT THE SANDINISTAS MAY BE SERIOUS ABOUT REACHING AGREEMENT WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS IS REASSURING BUT I REMAINED UNCONVINCED ON THE BASIS OF SANDINISTA STATEMENTS.

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6. DEL VALLE AND ABADIA BOTH SAID SEVERAL TIMES THAT PANAMA FULLY AGREES AN AGREEMENT MUST BE COMPREHENSIVE, VERIFIABLE AND "VIALE". WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN A SUPERFICIAL AGREEMENT; NOR WILL WE WALK AWAY FROM THE PROBLEM AFTER SIGNATURE. THREE YEARS OF EFFORT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN A WASTE OF TIME, DEL VALLE SAID. THE SANDINISTAS HAVE TO COMPLY, ABADIA ADDED. ON THE OTHER HAND, ABADIA SAID, ONE SHOULD NOT CONCLUDE IN ADVANCE THAT THE SANDINISTAS WILL VIOLATE ANY AGREEMENT. THAT WOULD BE LIKE REFUSING TO MARRY FOR FEAR OF BEING CUCKOLDED. I SAID STATEMENTS INDICATING THAT THERE IS LITTLE LEFT TO COMPLETE AN AGREEMENT TROUBLE US, BECAUSE OUR REVIEW OF THE TREATY TEXT

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SUGGESTS A GREAT DEAL OF DETAILED WORK REMAINS. IT CONCERNS US THAT CONTADORA MAY PRESS FOR SIGNATURE OF AN AGREEMENT OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES, LEAVING "DETAILS TO BE WORKED OUT." SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD NOT MEET THE CRITERIA SET FORTH IN MY LETTER OF APRIL 11. "I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND THAT," I SAID. DEL VALLE AND ABADIA NODDED.

7. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, ABADIA SAID HE HAS BEEN WAITING FOR THE RETURN OF VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS CABRERA FROM THE NAM MEETING IN NEW DELHI TO RESUME CONTADORA NEGOTIATIONS. CABRERA IS EXPECTED MOMENTARILY, ABADIA SAID. DEL VALLE INTERJECTED THAT HE HAS BEEN THINKING THAT THERE SHOULD BE A MEETING OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES, OR PERHAPS OF FOREIGN MINISTERS PRIOR TO THE ARIAS INAUGURATION. THE WORK ON THE TWO REMAINING ISSUES COULD THEN BE REVIEWED AT THE ARIAS INAUGURATION.

8. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION OF SANDINISTA CONDITIONS FOR SIGNATURE, ABADIA INTIMATED THAT PRESIDENT ORTEGA SENT DEL VALLE A PRIVATE COMMUNICATION IN ADDITION TO THE SANDINISTAS' PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE CONTADORA COMMUNIQUE. BUT HE WAS RELUCTANT TO BE DRAWN OUT, WHICH I TOOK AS AN INDICATION THAT THERE IS NO SEPARATE MESSAGE. ABADIA SAID THE NICARAGUANS ARE WILLING TO SIGN UNDER THE CARABALLEDA DOCUMENT'S CONCEPT OF SIMULTANEITY. (NOTE: THIS CAVEAT IS IN THE NICARAGUANS' PUBLIC RESPONSE.) ABADIA CLAIMED THAT THE CONCEPT OF SIMULTANEITY IN THE CARABALLEDA DOCUMENT PROTECTS THE UNITED STATES FROM THE SANDINISTAS IMPOSING PRECONDITIONS. I DISAGREED; REFERENCES TO CARABALLEDA ARE INSUFFICIENT TO SATISFY US, I SAID. WE WILL LOOK VERY CLOSELY AT THE TREATY ITSELF TO SEE IF IT IS ACCEPTABLE. EXPLAINING THE AMERICAN PHRASE "A PIG IN A POKE," I SAID WE WILL MAKE SURE THE PIG HAS FOUR FEET, A SNOUT, ETC., BEFORE WE WILL BUY IT. I LATER REPEATED WHAT I SAID AT THE BEGINNING: THE CONTADORA COUNTRIES HAVE ASSUMED A RESPONSIBILITY TO PRODUCE AN AGREEMENT THAT IS COMPREHENSIVE, VERIFIABLE, AND SIMULTANEOUS. WE WILL NOT SETTLE FOR ANYTHING LESS. WE HAVE HAD TOO MANY UNHAPPY EXPERIENCES WITH AGREEMENTS THAT SUPPOSEDLY PROVIDE FOR VERIFICATION TO SIGN ON TO INCOMPLETE DOCUMENTS. I NOTED OUR OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED COSTA RICAN/NICARAGUAN BORDER AGREEMENT, BECAUSE IT CONSTITUTES A SALAMI-SLICE APPROACH WHEREBY THE NICARAGUANS PICK AND CHOOSE WHAT THEY WANT. DEL VALLE AGREED.

9. DEL VALLE SAID THAT HE HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED THE HEADS OF THE NICARAGUAN INTERNAL OPPOSITION PARTIES. THE PANAMANIAN GAVE THE NICARAGUAN LEADERS PLENTY OF PRESS AND TELEVISION EXPOSURE. SUCH EFFORTS COULD HELP PRESSURE THE SANDINISTAS TO SIGN JUNE 6, DEL VALLE SAID. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, DEL VALLE SAID THE PANAMANIAN HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE UNO LEADERSHIP. I FOLLOWED UP THAT THE CONTRAS ARE NICARAGUANS, WHO HAVE A LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO STRUGGLE. I NOTED THAT, WHEREAS THERE ARE NO AMERICANS KILLING NICARAGUANS, THERE ARE CUBANS KILLING NICARAGUANS, MANNING GUNSHIPS AND ADVISING SANDINISTA TROOPS IN THE FIELD. DEL VALLE PICKED UP ON MY MENTION OF THE CONTRAS AND EARLIER DESCRIPTION OF CONTADORA AS
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AN ALTERNATIVE THE SANDINISTAS HAVE TO WAR.
IS CONTADORA AN ALTERNATIVE ("A DOOR") FOR THE
CONTRAS. HE ASKED? (BY THIS I THINK HE MEANT
WHETHER UNO WILL ACCEPT A CONTADORA AGREEMENT.)

10. I REPLIED "OF COURSE." CONTADORA HAS TO
BE A DOOR FOR THE CONTRAS. CONTADORA WILL NOT
WORK UNLESS IT PROVIDES EFFECTIVELY FOR DEMOCRATIC
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. AN AGREEMENT THAT DOES
NOT RESOLVE THE ISSUE THAT HAS CAUSED THE CONTRAS
TO TAKE UP ARMS IS NO SOLUTION. THE CONTRAS
HAVE TO BE REINCORPORATED INTO NICARAGUAN SOCIETY,
WITH EFFECTIVE AMNESTY AND GUARANTEES FOR THEIR
SECURITY. THIS IMPLIES THE NECESSITY FOR A
DIALOGUE WITH THE CONTRAS, CEASE-FIRE, AND
DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION. THE
CONTADORA TEXT MAKES ONLY GENERAL PROVISION FOR
A POLITICAL VERIFICATION COMMITTEE. THE LACK
OF SERIOUS ATTENTION TO NATIONAL RECONCILIATION
THAT INCLUDES THE ARMED OPPOSITION IS ONE OF
THE THINGS TROUBLING US, I CONCLUDED.

11. ABADIA SAID HE IS REASSURED THAT THE U.S.
SEES CONTADORA AS "THE" ALTERNATIVE TO THE USE
OF FORCE, A CHARACTERIZATION I MADE EARLIER.
ABADIA SAID HE AGREES ON THE NEED FOR PRESSURE,
BUT ONLY UP TO A POINT. BEYOND THAT, IT BECOMES
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, ABADIA SAID, MENTIONING
SANDINISTA "INFANTILISM" IN A WHISPERED
ASIDE TO DEL VALLE. I REPEATED THAT THE
SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT FEEL THAT CONTADORA
HAS TO BE PURSUED. IT IS THE ONLY NEGOTIATING
MECHANISM NOW IN PLACE. IF IT WERE TO FAIL,
HOWEVER, WE WOULD HAVE TO SEEK OTHER MEANS
TO BRING CHANGE, INCLUDING INCREASED PRESSURE.
THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER THE UNITED STATES
SUPPORTS CONTADORA BUT IF THE SANDINISTAS SEE
IT AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PROTRACTED CONFLICT.
THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES DO SEE CONTADORA
AS SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE, BUT DO NOT WANT A CONTADORA
AGREEMENT THAT ALLOWS THE SANDINISTAS TO CONSOLIDATE
A MARXIST-LENINIST STATE.

12. COMMENT: DEL VALLE AND ABADIA APPEARED
WELL-BRIEFED IN WHAT THEY WOULD HEAR FROM ME
AND WERE READY WITH REASSURANCES. NEVERTHELESS,
THEY APPEARED SOBERED BY THE EMPHASIS I PUT ON
THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO GET AN EFFECTIVE AGREEMENT
AND MY CLARIFICATION THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD
HAVE TO BE COMPREHENSIVE, INCLUDING POLITICAL
CHANGE AND SECURITY/MILITARY COMMITMENTS AS
ENVISAGED IN THE CONTADORA OBJECTIVES.
TAMBS

END OF MESSAGE

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